

to solve the numerous issues that are devastating the Nation.

The President's speech didn't address the root causes of inflation, a crisis that is crushing many American families.

I found it ironic that Biden talked about securing the border when, throughout his entire time in office, he has actively ignored the unprecedented number of illegal crossings, which are due to his open border policies currently in place.

Finally, I am incredibly disappointed that he made no plan to restore American energy independence. We can produce affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy right here at home in States like my home State of Oklahoma.

Frankly, his address focused a lot on rehashing and disguising Build Back Better while lacking concrete solutions to the pressing issues negatively impacting the lives of American people.

ECONOMIC PROGRESS

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, at last night's State of the Union, President Biden had every reason to cite his extraordinary job creation record, the fastest job growth in U.S. history. After only one year in office, the President's American Rescue Plan was at the center of this achievement. Our economic growth was the fastest in nearly 40 years. As a result, the United States had a faster recovery than every other advanced economy in the G7.

This progress has been made even while the United States is trying to defeat COVID-19. As chair of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, I was particularly pleased to hear the President emphasize infrastructure, making goods move faster and cheaper, because this can only add to the historic job creation record he has achieved.

CALIFORNIA'S DEVASTATING 2021 FIRE SEASON

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I would like to point out to the Members here tonight once again that California had a very devastating fire season last year. The whole Western States of America have.

The Dixie fire alone was nearly 1 million acres in my district. Several other fires add up into the six-digit figures.

What we really need to do is have the United States Forest Service identify a fire within the first 24 hours of when a fire occurs and then pounce on it and put the fire out—no more monitoring fire.

Some other colleagues and I will be looking at legislation to put that in

place. We were promised by the Forest Service that would be their policy. We need to enforce that. We need to have that be the dedication they have toward taking care of these Federal lands.

Indeed, there are multi-uses for people, for timber, for preservation. But when they go up in smoke, it just becomes a horrific environmental problem: first, air quality, and then the ash, the silt that is going to wash into our streams and oceans and water storage.

The Forest Service needs to get on the job.

SUPPORTING THE PACT ACT

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the PACT Act that Chairman TAKANO and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs brought before us today. I was very pleased to vote for it.

When those who go to serve our country abroad or even here at home come back to civilian life, they often carry with them the injuries of toxic exposure, such as burn pits, and we have a moral obligation for their care.

Madam Speaker, to shift to a different subject, as we watch the slaughter in Ukraine, I would urge the Government of the United States and the President of the United States to mobilize our National Guard Partnership for Peace programs across the various States. Ohio is linked to Serbia and Hungary, and Illinois to Poland.

There are ways for us as a country to use idle aircraft, like C-130 sitting on the ground in this country, where the American people want to donate blankets and bandages in ways of caring for those who are being killed and injured, who are hungry in the Nation of Ukraine. That is an unrealized asset we have.

We could do that overnight if we had the will to do it, the Partnership for Peace, the State Partnership for Peace, which is part of the U.S. Department of Defense under the National Guard Bureau.

Madam Speaker, I ask the President to help us help Ukraine.

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SECURE THE BORDER

(Mr. ROSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, I was shocked when President Biden said "we need to secure the border" during his State of the Union address. In his first year in office, over 2 million illegal immigrants were apprehended at the southern border, deportations decreased by 70 percent, and 11,000 migrants were arrested who had previous criminal convictions.

Actions speak louder than words, and when Mr. Biden halted construction of President Trump's border wall and attempted to reverse the remain in Mexico policy, we knew that he didn't want to secure the border. The Biden administration's open border policies put immense strain on law enforcement as they work to combat the fentanyl crisis wreaking havoc on our communities.

In fact, Cumberland County, Tennessee, Sheriff Casey Cox recently took a trip to the southern border to gain a better understanding of the issue after a local 18-year-old woman died of a fentanyl overdose. Much like on my own trips to the border, Sheriff Cox observed how understaffed and ill-prepared we are to face the crisis under the Biden administration.

Madam Speaker, I urge the President to back up his words with action and do what he said: secure the border.

AMERICANS CANNOT MAKE ENDS MEET

(Ms. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, last night President Biden delivered a powerful speech on the state of our Union in this very Chamber. He outlined the historic achievements of the past year and spoke directly to the American people about his vision to continue building a better America.

Despite the progress we have seen, too many of our fellow Americans still cannot make ends meet. Too many families are struggling to afford rising food, childcare, housing, and gas prices. And too many of our neighbors remain locked out of the promise of America.

I stand with President Biden in his call to continue building our economy from the bottom up and the middle out. It is time to lower costs for families by reducing prescription drug prices, expanding access to affordable healthcare, and investing in pre-kindergarten education.

It is time to increase pay by raising the minimum wage and protecting the right to organize. And, yes, it is time to extend the child tax credit.

Last night, I was honored to host Shaneice Ball of Cleveland as my guest for the State of the Union. As a State-tested nursing assistant and a mom of three with one on the way, Shaneice is the epitome of resilience, tenacity, and the American people's ability to persevere through tough times.

WE CANNOT FORGET ABOUT OUR SOUTHERN BORDER

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, with regard to what is going on in Ukraine, I stand with everybody in saying it is an absolutely horrific

thing. If the United States can keep Ukraine and free Ukraine, that is what we should all be hoping and praying for.

We heard a speech last night, in addition to the very relevant numbers, and in addition to the numbers of people dying in Ukraine and the people being injured, we cannot forget that every month in America another 90,000 people cross our southern border. We cannot forget that every month in America 8,000 more people die of drug overdoses. We cannot forget in America, compared to 3 years ago, we deport, every month, approximately 6,000 less people from this country for committing crimes.

Madam Speaker, I realize a lot is going on around the world and it is easy to forget about it, but America should not allow its politicians to forget about this huge sea of people crossing the border and the huge number of people dying of drug overdoses and the broken hearts of their parents, their siblings, and their children.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, yesterday President Biden stood in this very room and addressed a Nation during the State of the Union that was looking to the kind of unity, strength, and commitment that we heard last night. We saw a President who is concerned as our leader for the people. We saw a President who has the empathy for the families and what they have gone through because he, himself, has lived that experience. We saw a leader who is not afraid to stand up to those that threaten all we love.

America sent a clear message to the world that the United States stands steady and steadfast with the people and government of Ukraine. We are united against the unforgivable, unjust, and unprovoked Russian invasion. America is united against Putin, his actions, and what he represents.

The difference is striking. The difference is striking as to what Putin represents with his strong-man mentality, with his autocracy, with his hatred of those he does not know versus what America stands for.

America stands for the embrace of democracy because it is democracy

that looks to maintain that when a people elect their government, that when a people vote for a President, such as we have seen in Ukraine, that that democracy must be honored, and nobody should be allowed to take it away. President Putin is not allowed to take it away.

We saw a President who is building bridges. He is building bridges across our country and the world. He is building actual bridges, the kind of bridges that will connect a school bus to the student who needs to get to school in my district. He is building the kind of bridges that needed to be fixed decades ago that are falling down right before our eyes when he goes to dedicate them.

Those are real bridges that we need in America, that so many Presidents—the President before talked about bridges and infrastructure, but who delivered? President Biden delivered together with this Congress. He delivered together with a bipartisan House vote where we actually thought it was bipartisan because we got 10 Republicans in this House to vote for that Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

But the other kind of bridges he is building are equally important to talk about because those are the bridges of unity. Our former President, he cared about walls. He cared about walls that divide us. He cared about walls that did not do anything that we need. Instead, we now have a President who builds the bridges of unity.

Imagine the kind of work and diplomacy that this President had to do to overcome the threats that the United States would leave NATO, which is what our former President tried to do. Imagine the unity that had to be called out and that had to be cajoled, given that this President was faced with overcoming from our former President's admiration for Putin. Everyone might remember, he has even recently called him a genius. Right?

Instead, we had a President that said no, and that called Putin what he really is, a man who is delusional about what you can accomplish with force. This President, President Biden, has united a world together to repel and to impose sanctions that you wouldn't have imagined.

The idea that we now have Switzerland saying: No, it is not right, we shall not stay neutral because this is so wrong. We must stand up against the darkness. We must stand with the American people who seek light. We will stand against those who seek darkness. We stand against those who want to govern from a place of hatred and fear because we will govern from a place of love for our communities, of love for our families, of love for democracy, and of love for the idea that we must be a world united in the pursuit of peace.

Madam Speaker, I loved the fact that I was able to invite a virtual guest to the State of the Union. I was able to invite Victoria Dominguez as my

hometown hero. My hometown hero comes from Cuba, New Mexico. I had the great fortune of visiting with Victoria Dominguez and the Cuba School District just the Friday before we flew out here.

I can tell you, the love that Victoria Dominguez has for her community and for the children who attend her school is visible in that smile that she shares with you when she talks about them. Cuba is quite special because Cuba is nestled close to the mountains. The people of Cuba cut firewood to warm their home. The people of Cuba are connected with each other.

The people of Cuba don't necessarily have other resources. So when the pandemic hit, the children of Cuba did not have internet, they did not have the ability to remotely learn. The children of Cuba School Districts did not necessarily have the nutrition they needed, the supplies they needed to make it through that dark winter.

But what did Cuba do? Cuba rallied. I love the fact that not only is Victoria Dominguez a hero, but the bus drivers of Cuba, New Mexico, are heroes. They have appeared on the cover of Time magazine because of the work they did. You see them standing in front of their buses because those school buses—working together with Cuba CARES—which our beautiful Victoria Dominguez organized—those school buses took to the students and their families the work that they needed for their schools. They took them the food that they needed to nourish their bodies so that they could also nourish their brains. They took them what they needed.

The thing is that as we are coming out of COVID—thank you, thank you—as we are coming out of COVID and we are learning to handle and to respond to it, as we are able to remove our masks, Cuba CARES isn't going away because we know that caring for your community is not something you do once and walk away from.

I know that Victoria Dominguez is going to continue caring for those beautiful children who attend the Cuba schools. I am so pleased to talk about the work that Victoria Dominguez does because it is the epitome of what we want to support within the Congressional Progressive Caucus because this is the Congressional Progressive Caucus' Special House.

This is when we want to talk about the way in which we can promote and move agendas that focus on our communities. That we can promote and pursue policy that comes from a place of love, that is about creating opportunities, that is about imagining the possibilities, as President Biden said last night. That is what we need to do as a government.

The last thing I want to say about our wonderful hometown hero is that Victoria Dominguez received both her undergraduate and graduate social work degrees from New Mexico Highlands University.